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#### ARTICLES:

(14) Poll: Cabinet support rating falls 4 points to 48%

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Abridged)  
February 12, 2006

In a recent telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey conducted Feb. 10-11, the support rating for the cabinet of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was 48%, down 4 percentage points from the last survey conducted in January. The nonsupport rating for the Koizumi cabinet rose 5 points to 40%. The cabinet support rating rebounded after Prime Minister Koizumi's dissolution of the Diet for postal privatization and was over 50%. However, it fell below 50% for the first time in six months, possibly reflecting the Livedoor shock. The figure still remains high. Among those who support no specific party, however, the Koizumi cabinet's approval and disapproval ratings have changed places. As seen from this finding, there are also changes in the structure of public support for the Koizumi cabinet.

Among female respondents, the Koizumi cabinet's support rate was 50%, almost leveling off with a slight drop of 1 point. Among male respondents, however, the figure in support of the Koizumi cabinet markedly dropped from 52% to 40%. Among those in their 50s, the cabinet support rate decreased 13 points from 48% to 35%. Among those who support the ruling Liberal Democratic Party,

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the cabinet support rate was 82%. Among those who support the New Komeito, a coalition partner of the LDP, the cabinet support rate was 57%. Among those with no particular party affiliation, however, the Koizumi cabinet's support rate was 39% (44% in the last survey) and its nonsupport rate was 44% (37% in the last survey). As seen from these figures, the disapproval rating topped the approval rating in the latest survey.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 31 %, up 3 percentage points from the last poll. The leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) also rose 3 points to 20%.

(15) Poll on Koizumi cabinet, political parties, female accession to imperial throne

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 12, 2006

#### Questions & Answers

(T = total; P = previous; M = male; F = female)

Q: Do you support the Koizumi cabinet?

	T	P	M	F
Yes	48	(52)	45	50
No	40	(35)	44	36
Not interested	10	(13)	9	12

Q: (Only for those who answered "yes" to the above question) Why?

T	P	M	F
Because the prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party			
5	(5)	6	4
Because something can be expected of Prime Minister Koizumi's leadership			
29	(28)	32	26
Because new policy measures can be expected			
17	(15)	16	18
Because the nature of politics is likely to change			
46	(51)	45	47

Q: (Only for those who answered "no" to the above question) Why?

T	P	M	F
13	(9)	14	12
Because the prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party			
21	(21)	22	20
Because the prime minister compromises too much with the ruling parties			
29	(40)	29	30
Because the nation's economic recovery is slow			
25	(19)	23	27
Because the prime minister is reluctant to take action against political scandals			

Q: Which political party do you support?

T	P	M	F
31	(28)	33	30
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)			
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto)			

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20	(17)	23	17
New Komeito (NK)			
4	(6)	2	6
Japanese Communist Party (JCP)			
4	(3)	5	3
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto)			
2	(2)	2	2
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto)			
0	(0)	0	--
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon)			
0	(0)	--	0
Other parties			
1	(1)	3	0
None			
36	(41)	31	40

Q: Do you support female accession to the imperial throne?

	T	P	M	F
Yes	78		74	81
No	17		19	15

Q: To date Japan has preserved the male line of imperial succession with emperors receiving imperial blood from the father's side. If those receiving imperial blood from the mother's side are also allowed to ascend to the imperial throne, it will be a historic changeover. Do you think the male line of imperial succession should be preserved, or do you otherwise think female-line succession should be allowed as well?

T	P	M	F
29		30	29
Male-line succession should be kept			
65		63	67
Female-line succession should also be allowed			

Q: Her Imperial Highness Princess Kiko is expected to give birth to a baby this fall. Do you support revising the Imperial House Law before that during the current Diet session to allow female and female-line succession to the imperial throne?

	T	P	M	F
Yes	39		34	42
No	55		59	51

Q: Do you think the Imperial House Law should be revised even in case the law is not revised at the current Diet session?

	T	P	M	F
Yes	52		54	50
No	41		39	42

(Note) Figures shown in percentage, rounded off. "0" indicates that the figure was below 0.5 %. "--" denotes that no respondents answered. "No answer" omitted. Parentheses denote the results of the last survey conducted Jan. 21-22.

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Feb. 10-11 over the telephone with the aim of calling a total of 1,000 voters across the nation on a computer-aided random digit sampling (RDS) basis. Answers were obtained from 1,115 persons.

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(16) Poll: 39% for, 55% against revising Imperial House Law in current Diet session; 65% support emperor of matrilineal descent

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Abridged)  
February 12, 2006

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey on Feb. 10-11. In the survey, respondents were asked if they were in favor of revising the Imperial House Law during the current Diet session before Princess Kiko, the wife of Emperor Akihito's younger son Prince Akishino, gives birth to a baby, in order to allow female accession to the imperial throne or an emperor of matrilineal descent. In response, "yes" accounted for 39%, with "no" at 55%. Even in the event Princess Kiko gives birth to a boy, 52% said it is necessary to revise the law, with 41% said it is unnecessary to do so. Respondents were also asked if they would support a female monarch, and 78% answered "yes" to this question. The poll also found that 65% would support an emperor of matrilineal descent, meaning a person who received imperial blood only from the mother's side. The figure is down from a previous survey conducted in December last year, but still accounts for a majority.

(17) US deputy under secretary of defense gives no grounds for estimated cost of relocating Marines in Okinawa to Guam

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 11, 2006

Defense Agency (JDA) Director General Nukaga met with US Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Lawless at the Defense Agency yesterday. Nukaga called on Lawless to present grounds for the estimated cost worked out by the US to transfer Marines now stationed in Okinawa to Guam. Both sides incorporated this transfer plan in the interim report on US force realignment. Specific grounds are necessary for the agency to submit bills related to financial aid for the transfer to the current Diet session. Nukaga said: "In order to take satisfactory legal and budgetary bills by March, we will need to quickly map out specific measures at an early date." But Lawless stopped short of mentioning the basis for the calculation or a timeframe for presenting it.

According to JDA officials, Nukaga told Lawless: "The entire world now knows that Japan and the US will come up (with a final report) by March. A failure to do so will inevitably have a negative impact on bilateral relations." Lawless replied: "If we miss this opportunity, it will become impossible to realign the US forces in the next decade or two." Lawless, though, added: "More problems have been left unresolved than expected."

(18) US force realignment: Japan, US faced with mounting challenges before reaching settlement in March; Local consent not obtained, huge relocation cost not clear

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged)  
February 11, 2006

The Japanese and US governments have been speeding up their talks on the planned US force realignment in an effort to produce a final report by the end of March, as planned. In a three-day meeting that began in Tokyo on Feb. 9, senior officials of the

two countries worked hard to finalize specific plans and costs for the relocation of US bases. The prevailing view is that obtaining local consent before producing a final report will be difficult. The two countries are faced with mounting challenges.

#### Local coordination

In his talks with US Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless on the night of Feb. 10, Defense Agency Director General Fukushima Nukaga revealed his intention to put an end to the ongoing deputy director-level talks in February. He said:

"In light of the future political timetable, we need to settle issues, including seeking local understanding and cooperation, before the end of February. Otherwise, it will be difficult to produce a final report in March."

Nukaga also underlined the importance of measures for local areas, saying, "Lawmakers know it is important to offer explanations to the electorate."

In the talks on Feb. 10, senior officials of the two countries discussed the realignment and consolidation of US bases in the central and southern parts of Okinawa and other matters. US officials are scheduled to explain the cost for relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam today.

But local chiefs have yet to agree to the planned realignment. For instance, when Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro of Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, the relocation site for US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station, called on government and ruling party leaders on Feb. 9, he reiterated his intention to reject a plan to relocate Futenma Air Station to the coast of Camp Schwab. Shimabukuro has reportedly cancelled his meeting with Nukaga as well. "It was a message that Shimabukuro would not discuss the matter with the Defense Agency, which has refused to make changes to the coastal plan," a Defense Agency official said.

Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture, is also scheduled to conduct a municipal plebiscite on March 12 on the propriety of shifting carrier-borne aircraft from Atsugi to Iwakuni. The stage is not set to obtain the consent of affected local governments before the final report is produced in March.

Although Nukaga announced a plan Feb. 7 to establish a council of the central government and affected local governments, specific steps and other factors have yet to be worked out. Some in the government have begun whispering of the need to postpone local coordination until after the production of final report.

#### A financial burden

In the current talks with the US, Japan has put particularly high priority on its share of the expenses for relocating US Marines to Guam. In talks in the past, the US has informed Japan that the relocation would cost approximately 8 billion dollars in total. But a Defense Agency official complained: "The figure lacks a clear basis for the calculation, including the number of facilities to be built and other specifics. The estimate is simply too rough."

Contrary to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's remarks that realignment cannot wait any longer, the US has been slow to work

out detailed estimates and make arrangements within the US military for the planned base relocations.

Discord in the Japanese government is also being mentioned. On Jan. 30, the Defense Agency replaced Defense Policy Bureau Deputy Director General Chisato Uchiyama, who was responsible for the deputy-director-level talks, with the agency's spokesman Hironori

Kanazawa. The Defense Agency has rejected making any changes to the plan to relocate Futenma Air Station to the coast of Camp Schwab, while the Foreign Ministry seems willing to alter the plan.

The Defense Agency and the Foreign Ministry are also at odds over the return of the air traffic control held by Yokota Air Base, with the former contending that there is every reason for the US to return to Japan control of the airspace over the country's capital and the latter arguing that the US is unwilling to return it because of operational reasons, so there is no need to ask for it so strongly.

(19) US force realignment: Japan presents compromise plan to allow partial use of Iwakuni by aerial tankers

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 12, 2006

Japan and the United States held deputy-director-level talks in Tokyo on Feb. 11 to discuss the planned relocation of aerial tankers based at US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture. In the session, Japan presented compromise plans to basically relocate them to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's Kanoya base in Kagoshima Prefecture, as specified in the interim report, and also to allow them to partially use the US Marine Corps' Iwakuni Air Station, as called for by the US. The compromise plans called for the use of Iwakuni only within the limits of not increasing noise. The two countries plan to continue the discussions.

The interim report gave priority to relocating 12 KC-130 tanker planes from Futenma Air Station to the Kanoya base, saying, "The two countries will reach a final decision based on a study on operational and technical factors."

In the talks, the US presented an official estimate of 8 billion dollars (856 billion yen based on the fiscal 2005 exchange rate) for the relocation of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam. The US also promised that it would soon present Japan with a detailed breakdown of the costs, in addition to rough estimates for base facilities and training facilities. The US, however, did not present Japan's share of the expenses.

(20) Police to investigate leading precision equipment maker in Kawasaki tomorrow over illegal supplies of nuclear-related equipment to China, Thailand

SANKEI (Top Play) (Slightly abridged)  
February 12, 2006

The Metropolitan Police Board (MPB) has decided to raid a leading precision equipment maker based in Kawasaki possibly tomorrow on suspicion of a violation of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law. The company allegedly exported three-dimensional measuring equipment and related software to China and

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Thailand in 2001 without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Economic, Trade, and Industry (METI).

The three-dimensional measuring equipment can be used for operating centrifuges designed to enrich uranium in the process of manufacturing nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspected nuclear weapons facilities in Libya from December 2003 through March 2004, following leader Kadhafi's admission that the Libyan government had been engaged in the development of nuclear and chemical weapons and his agreement to accept IAEA inspections. The UN nuclear watchdog found the high-tech equipment in question and other types of measuring equipment at a nuclear development research institute.

Investigators suspect the equipment was illegally exported to Libya through a third country. In response to a report submitted

by the IAEA, the MPB, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry and METI, traced the equipment's shipping route.

The Libyan government explained to the IAEA: "We procured the nuclear-related equipment on the international black market."

The Metropolitan Police Board now suspects through the investigation that the measuring equipment had been flown into North Korea or had been put on the nuclear black market via Thailand or other countries. In 2003, the MPB prosecuted a trading firm on suspicion of attempting to supply North Korea with direct current stabilizing power-supply equipment without permission in violation of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law. At that time, the MPB found that the firm had planned to illegally export the product to North Korea through a corporation in Thailand in order to avoid a METI investigation.

The company in question in Kawasaki was established in 1938 and is the nation's largest precision equipment maker. The manufacturer has strategic bases in 23 countries across the world, including such communist countries as China and Vietnam, as well as nuclear powers like India.

(21) SDP adopts declaration calling SDF unconstitutional and previous support for single-seat system "mistake"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 12, 2006

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) at its 10th party convention held on Feb. 10 adopted a declaration saying, "The existence of the Self-Defense Forces clearly violates the Constitution." The declaration also touched on the party's aim of disbanding the SDF in the future, saying, "We aim to realize an unarmed Japan." The SDP, which declared the SDF constitutional in 1994 when it was called the Social Democratic Party of Japan, has again openly referred to the SDF as unconstitutional, shifting its stance.

Party head Mizuho Fukushima delivered a speech in which she said, "The SDF, which have been dispatched to Iraq to assist the US military using force, can hardly be said to be within the purview of the Constitution." She also underlined the need to maintain Article 9, revealing her party's plan to oppose a move to submit to the Diet a national referendum bill stipulating a set of procedures for amending the Constitution.

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Secretary General Seiji Mataichi also indicated that the party's

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support for a bill implementing the system combining single-seat constituencies and proportional representation in 1993-1994 had been a mistake. The party approved his view. The party also decided to restore the honor of the nine Lower and Upper House members who had been punished for revolting against party policy.

The party convention ends Feb. 12 with the adoption of an action policy aiming, among other things, to win seven seats in next summer's Upper House election.

(22) SDP calls SDF "unconstitutional" in party platform; DPJ's Maehara says it is "regrettable"

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 12, 2006

The opposition Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) has adopted a declaration expressly stipulating that the Self-Defense Forces are "clearly in an unconstitutional state." Asked about this declaration, Seiji Maehara, president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), noted yesterday to reporters in the city of Oita that it is important to think of how to rewrite the Constitution, as the SDF are needed for Japan. "It's regrettable that the SDP is now back in an unrealistic situation," Maehara said.

(23) Government to strengthen ties with India, Australia against China

ASAHI (Page 4) (Slightly abridged)  
February 11, 2006

Japan-China relations are growing more and more serious as seen from the sharp exchange of barbs between both countries' leaders over Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Although both sides have continued holding working-level talks and personnel exchanges at the levels of private citizens and lawmakers, the prime minister and Foreign Minister Aso have taken an uncompromising stance toward China. Such a stance has been reflected in the Foreign Ministry's China policy. The ministry is gearing up to check China by deepening Japan's ties with India and Australia.

The antagonism between Japan and China is becoming fierce. In a House of Representatives Budget Committee meeting on Feb. 7, Prime Minister Koizumi said: "Only the Chinese and South Korean leaders say where the Japanese prime minister can or cannot go in his own country." In reaction, Chinese State Council member Tang Jiaxuan (deputy premier-level official responsible for foreign policy) told visiting Lower House member Takeshi Noda on Feb. 8: "We can no longer place expectations on Prime Minister Koizumi." Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe criticized Tang's remark as "inappropriate as a statement made by a leader."

(When Noda visited China,) he said to Chinese officials that the Japanese government was ready to hold summits and foreign ministerial meetings with Beijing. But China adamantly refused such talks, citing the prime minister's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. Foreign Minister Aso made a statement in a speech on Feb. 4 indicating that the level of education in Taiwan was improved when it was under Japan's control. This remark further stiffened

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China's stance.

Chinese First Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo arrived in Japan to attend the vice-minister-level comprehensive policy talks started on Feb. 10 in Tokyo. A Chinese Communist Party member quoted him as saying: "I came to Japan, although some suggested that I not do so." The Japanese government aims to create an amicable atmosphere in the talks by selecting a hot spring resort as the site. Japan and China are also expected to soon hold bureau-director-level talks on the issue of gas field development in the East China Sea.

At the same time, the Japanese Foreign Ministry aims to deepen the partnerships Japan formed with India and Australia during the East Asia Summit late last year. Foreign Minister Aso toured India during the New Year's holiday and is also expected to visit Australia in March.

Administrative Vice Minister Shotaro Yachi visited member countries of the European Union (EU) and work on them to continue their bans on arms exports to China. Yachi succeeded in soliciting an agreement from German Chancellor Angela Merkel to take a cautious stance about lifting the ban.

China, though, has indicated no signs of changing its attitude.

(24) Editorial: Secret pact on Okinawa reversion - time to come clean

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 11, 2006

A former senior Foreign Ministry official admitted to the fact that Japan paid the cost of restoring land in Okinawa to its original state (on behalf of the United States) in spite of the Japan-US agreement on the reversion of Okinawa (that stipulated the US obligation to pay the cost). The existence of a secret pact on Japan's shouldering of the cost was already revealed in



US government documents and other files, but this official was the first Japanese official to admit to the existence of such a pact.

The official who admitted Japan's shouldering of the cost is Bunroku Yoshino, who at the time served as chief of the ministry's American Affairs Bureau. In an interview with the Mainichi Shimbun, Yoshino essentially acknowledged the existence of a secret deal, noting: "The US Congress wouldn't have accepted it if Japan hadn't paid money." His acknowledgement is of great significance, given his role at the time in negotiations.

As for Okinawa, which since the end of WWII had been under US administration, in 1969 Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and President Nixon agreed that Okinawa would be nonnuclear and on a par with mainland Japan, and in 1971 they signed an agreement on reversion. The Diet approved the agreement.

This agreement stipulated that the US would on its own initiative pay four million dollars as compensation for damage US forces caused during their occupation to land previously owned by Okinawa residents. This cost was not supposed to be included in the 320 million yen Japan paid to the US to purchase its assets.

However, US government documents include a description that

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indicates the existence of a secret deal on Japan's shouldering of the cost.

According to a US government file the Mainichi Shimbun obtained at the US National Archives and Records Administration in 2002, four million dollars of the cost to restore land to its original state was supposed to have been paid by the US, but the amount was added to the 316 million dollars - the amount Japan paid to the US in return for the reversion of Okinawa. The file gave this explanation: "The Japanese government has become nervous about how to prevent the figure of four million dollars and the secret pact on this matter from coming out."

In 1971, a Mainichi Shimbun reporter obtained Foreign Ministry telegrams (on the secret pact) and reported on portions of them. Following the reports, the secret pact issue was debated in the Diet, but the government has continued to deny the existence of such a deal. This time, as well, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe commented: "We have been informed that there was no secret pact." Foreign Minister Taro Aso as well denied it, saying: "This issue has been resolved. There's no change in the Foreign Ministry's stance."

However, the testimony this time by a former Japanese diplomat corresponds to what US government documents indicated. In other words, a historical fact has now been confirmed. No matter how firmly the government denies it, it will be useless. Facts are not something the government can invent.

The government's basic stance about the disclosure of diplomatic documents is to disclose them in principle 30 years after their creation. But such documents relating to the reversion of Okinawa, Japan-USSR negotiations, and Japan-ROK treaty talks have not been opened to the public yet.

Under the Information Disclosure Law, the government is allowed not to disclose information in some cases, for instance: 1) there is fear of national security being endangered; 2) there is fear of damaging a relationship of trust with another country; and 3) there is fear of putting Japan at a disadvantage. But when it comes to the agreement on the reversion of Okinawa that was concluded 35 years ago, it has certainly entered the domain of history. And considering the present Japan-US relationship, it is least likely that disclosing relevant information would damage security or harm the relationship of trust.

Our advice is that it is about time for the government to admit to the fact.

